643 766 are placed in the tomb: two sheep skins (gando); some cushions (nagpouya); several bolsters (fourkamsé); and a zoukougré -- all made of leather. All of these are arranged as though the chief were to lie down to rest.

After the corpse has been washed (Naba Siguire, father of the present Mogho Naba, was washed by marabouts [125] since he was the son of a naba who was a Moslem believer), it is clothed all in white. In the house of every Mogho Naba a corner of the wall is [531] decorated with rather attractive designs, and the dead Mogho Naba ● 761] is carried through it on his way to the tomb. The sight of this corner, which is seldom visited, reminds the chief still living of the mortality of all beings and makes him realize that in the same way as he succeeded someone, so will he, in turn, be replaced by another; the corner will one day become an opening through which his own body will pass at the end of his lifetime.

In addition to the garments in which he is clothed, the following items are placed in the grave beside him: a folded white robe (fou yorgo); a pair of trousers (kourga); a blanket (fou gobga); a pair of slippers (néoda); a small knife (souga); a sword (zangoégo); a gourd of beer (dam) with a calabash over the neck and a small cloth (leppré) over it; a loaf of salt (yamsem); a gourd filled with a hundred kola nuts (gouré wamdé); a sewn sack filled with cowries (liguide ne yolmoumdi); napaga ornaments (douamba and zuyan); and tobacco if the chief smoked or chewed it.

[767] The undertaker is entitled to take the salt, some kola nuts, and some meat when he departs.

[126] When the burial is over, one walks around the house of the deceased.

643 It should be noted that before the burial or sometimes when the death of the king is first known, all of his wives who have children take flight for fear that their son will be made kourita.

The kourita is a child of the deceased and must bear the latter's name. He is exiled and must never, so long as he lives, look upon the new Mogho Naba. Until the emperor is represented on earth by his kourita, his successor cannot be named. This explains the general flight of all of the wives who have children.

to divine Providence. These are the mystics.

However, the deism of either type is not very deep. All believe that a dead person will rejoin his ancestors and dwell eternally with them. They imagine, however, that "the road to Eternity is hard and the Kingdom of God so remote from the earth that they give cowries to their dead to pay their way through difficulties, the hazards of the journey being directly related to the good or bad actions of the deceased."

This may be said to be a kind of vague notion of a hell or a purgatory. However, this hell is neither the "everlasting fire of the Christians nor the horrible sufferings of the Moslems," since the person is supposed to be with his relatives.

The Alkyoamé. One sometimes hears a Moaga say: "I cannot avenge what you have done to me, but it will be settled on the day of alkyoamé." This is a somewhat superficial notion of a Day of Judgment. The Moaga does not really believe in a final judgment any more than he believes in the end of the world or the resurrection of the body. By the words alkyoamé daré, he alludes to the day when he and his enemy will both die and God will subject one of them to a punishment -- understood to be temporary -- for the harm he has done the other. [200]

Beliefs and Superstitions Concerning the Soul After Death

What do the Mossi believe the human being to be? Man is composed of three elements: the visible body, the siga or toulé (soul), and the kima (ghost).

The siga, which may be called the soul, is the part of the man which is to return to God.

Siga. According to the Mossi, the siga or toulé is easily frightened. A great sorrow, illness, or the death of a loved one can cause it to abandon the body temporarily. It then assumes a human appearance and can be seen by the person himself or by others. In that case, charms or fetishes are used to make it return.

Its temporary absence from the body is not thought to have any serious consequences since this does not disturb the normal functions of the human organism, but, since body and soul cannot

live without each other, its prolonged absence is thought to cause death.

Kima (from ki, "to die"). This is a sort of silhouette of a person who is about to die. It is visible only to certain initiates. It is said, however, to be somewhat deformed, and its presence may make one's hair stand on end or cause shivers that paralyze the legs and make walking impossible.

The siga may be distinguished from the kima in that the latter, being already dead, has its head completely shaved, wears ashes in the form of [201] a cross or X on its forehead, or has its feet stained with blood.

As soon as the person dies, his kima roams around the house for a time and then joins his ancestors at Pilimpikou.

Pilimpikou. Pilimpikou is a village belonging to the administrative district of Koudougou (upper Volta). On a mountain nearby, there is a grotto which is regarded as the sacred place where the kimsé of all the dead Mossi assemble.

Legend has it that any deceased relative may be found again at Pilimpikou if one were so unfortunate as not to have been present during his last moments. One can also go there to find out where the deceased has hidden part of his fortune or some valuable object.

It is said that one has only to go to the Tingsoba of Pilimpikou and ask him to use his influence to call the deceased.

The Tingsoba orders the petitioner not to shed a single tear at the sight of the "ghost," and, the legend goes on to say, if the secret of the interview with the kima is not kept, the person will die within the year.

Finally, it is believed that when the kimsé welcome new members -- they represent the whole family of all the dead Mossi for countless generations -- they organize games whose echoes are heard by the inhabitants of Pilimpikou.

Young people of both sexes who were unmarried at the time of their death and newborn children who have died [202] return to that place where they dwelt before coming into the world in order to "return to human form in the womb of another woman or of their former mother." As we noted in an earlier paragraph, the Mossi believe in reincarnation. [203]

695 tomb and force him to drink water in which earth from the grave had been diluted. This test was greatly feared, for the Mossi believe that the deceased will come and take his revenge.

The defendant went free unless his guilt was proved by witnesses. When arguments arose about the ownership of fields, domestic animals, etc., each person concerned would give his arguments and summon his witnesses, and the judges made a decision on the basis of the discussions. If two women quarreled, their husbands were supposed to get together and reach a decision. The province chief judged disputes
692 concerning marriage. For instance, if a girl had been promised to someone and the bride price was paid in part, and then her father changed his mind and gave her to another, the disappointed suitor could appeal to the province chief, who saw to it that the payment was returned. If the defendant ran away to avoid trial, he could only be tried in absentia if witnesses deposed against him.

696 /25/ The sentence was carried out as far as possible, even in the
691 absence of the convicted party; if he returned, the trial was not re-
678 opened but he could appeal to the province chief. The family is held responsible in every case. If the sentence includes a fine, and if the convicted person's property is insufficient, the property of his relatives is seized. People are held accountable for their children's debts, and if the defendant runs away, one of his relatives is seized in his place. On the other hand, the head of the family is the abso-
[593] lute master and the judge of the family. He must pay his children's debts and the fines they have incurred, but he may chastise them, even put them to death, or banish and curse them, a punishment which as a rule is greatly feared. All this indicates the strength of the family ties, which we shall study in the second part of this work. The naba saw to the execution of the sentence pronounced by the court; the executive and judicial powers were vested in the same person. If anyone refused to pay his debts or to pay the inflicted penalty, he was stripped of his property. No commutation of the sentence was allowed, and the person condemned to irons or to death had to suffer the sentence himself and could not go free by paying a fine or by substituting a slave. Capital punishment was carried out in public. The province chief was entitled to grant a pardon, but,
● [761] of course, he made use of this right quite rarely. A man's life counts for so little in the eyes of the Black!

843 A woman's role is to bear children. When she knows that she is pregnant, she no longer consents to come to her husband, but she is careful not to inform him of her state; if she told him, the child would die. If her parents happen to pass away during her pregnancy, she does not go into mourning and does not attend the funeral. If she is newly wed and has not yet borne children, one of the other wives of her husband, or, if there are none, the husband's sister, comes at night to sprinkle the husband and wife with water. The young wife will henceforth call this woman her husband, prepare millet mush for her, and heat the water in which she washes. When the pregnancy begins to show, one of the wife's female relatives consults the sorcerer [782] to find out which sacrifice should be offered so that all will go well, but the husband is not informed of this consultation. Sometimes the sacrifice is repeated when the birth draws near. When the first baby 851 is born, the husband sends a child to his wife's relatives with a rooster or a hen depending on the newborn's sex. The child tosses the bird into the yard without saying a word and runs away; everybody understands.

847 /40/ A child born deformed, lame, or blind is done away with; 845 it is simply drowned without further ado if considered incurable. In 732 olden times, twins were often drowned also because their birth entails 761 difficulties for the family, who must offer special sacrifices; some- 753 times only one of them was done away with. If they are spared and die a natural death, the mother wears a small bell at her ankle until the anniversary of the death (kouré). If the mother happens to die or the father becomes ill, the sorcerer need only say so and the children are put to death, because they are said to have caused the illness or death of their parents. A baby who could barely walk was once brought by relatives to the Koupéla Fathers. He had been born on a Friday and his mother had died; that was sufficient to call for his sacrifice. His relatives tried unsuccessfully to poison him; they exposed him for three days in the bush, and the child did not die. As a last resort they brought him to the missionaries, who hastened to shelter him. Children recognized as insane are abandoned in the bush where they die of hunger.

732 It is only fair to add, however, that these barbarous practices 845 reminiscent of Sparta are not invariably followed. Several lame and incurably ill children are carefully tended by their parents, and some twins born prior to the French occupation are alive and in good health.

753 /66/ This is because illness is usually attributed to an evil spirit,
761 which must not be irked with complaints. Yet in everyday language it is God who is the cause of everything, of health as well as of death. The sorcerers consulted indicate which spirit must be appeased, to whom sacrifices must be offered; or they state quite frankly that the hour of the sick person has come, that his life is over and he is about to rejoin his ancestors, for it is often the latter who call him and come to fetch him. In the case of old men and especially of old women, death is considered a natural event. An old man has many children who will give him a fine funeral, and it is time for him to make way for his eldest son. If a quarrelsome person falls sick, his
[763] illness is often attributed to an evil spell cast by an enemy. When an elder is about to die, those who have caused him offense come to beg his forgiveness and only find peace when they have obtained it, for the old man might return to obtain his revenge. Sudden death is usually ascribed to poison and, alas, this is often the case. Sometimes it is also attributed to an evil spirit, especially in case of accident, fall, snake bite, etc.

755 The instinct of self-preservation is so strong in man that the Mossi,
757 although they ascribe a superhuman origin to illness, nevertheless fight it. It is true that all their treatments combine medicinal and superstitious elements to drive off evil spirits, and whatever the remedy, true medicine or amulet, it is always a tim; there is only the one
759 word to designate it. Some of the natives know how to treat certain illnesses, and people come to consult them, often from far away. One has a medicine against snakes, and he makes it in complete secrecy on a certain day; one knows how to treat colds and bronchitis;
[752] another, dysentery; yet another, sores. The bone-setters are often very skillful, and with the mere pressure of their fingers they can set a dislocated joint or a broken leg; then they enclose it between tightly-bound millet stalks as a splint. These doctors prescribe remedies without resorting to sacrifices or witchcraft. Sometimes they live with their patient to care for him, of course for a fee, especially if the person gets well.

751 Smallpox vaccination is performed, but often too late, on individuals who already have the germ. The vaccine is taken from a seriously ill person without any precautionary antiseptic measures. The vaccinated individual is usually made very sick and sometimes dies of

755 must be procured. The leaf used to cover a wound must be held by means of a thin cotton cord with cowries attached at the end, three cowries for a boy, four for a girl. A hemp cord with three or four knots, worn around the neck, wrist, or any other part of the body, prevents swelling of that part and is also a master remedy against hair worms. Sometimes it is not so easy to secure the prescribed amulet, for instance, if it is the beak or claw of a hawk, a deer horn, or certain parts of a buffalo or koba. The poor Mossi goes to great pains to find this indispensable amulet.

763 Do as he may, sooner or later he must die. When an old man feels that his end is near, he calls his family and gives them his last instructions. He talks to his eldest son and tells him where his cattle and caches are to be found, who are his debtors and creditors. Sometimes death comes swiftly without warning, and the old man has no time to talk to his heir; a large part of the fortune is thus lost, because a Mossi in good health never tells anybody, especially not his /68/ children, where his property is, and those to whom he has entrusted it do not return it. Some Peul have made rather nice profits in this fashion.

• 761 The death of a young man or woman or more especially that of a small child is usually ascribed to an old woman who is said to have 754 eaten the child's soul, and some old women claim to have this secret. [683] The sorcerer points out the guilty woman who is seized and put to death. Every sudden or accidental death is ascribed to an evil spirit, and the funeral ceremonies reflect this.

762 Suicide is extremely rare, but it does occur. Here is one case where we knew the participants. A man quarreled with his wife. The wife, who was stronger than her husband, overwhelmed him in the fight, and the neighbors openly ridiculed him. The following day the husband was found hanging in his hut. A pit was hastily dug [766] in his nearest field, and he was tossed into it naked without further ceremony. Suicide is regarded as a criminal act, and even the corpse is punished for it.

763 Like all human beings, the Mossi fear death. No longer to eat millet mush or to drink dolo seems to them the greatest of misfortunes. Still, when a Mossi sees death approaching, he resigns himself to it and accepts it stoically. He rests his head on the lap of his first wife, and his other wives gather around him. His friends and the village elders sit before the soukala, and all wait silently for hours until the

766 The death of a naba, as we mentioned earlier, is carefully concealed; the more powerful he was, the more careful the concealment.
579 This is done out of fear of the disturbances which would be created by those who aspire to his succession, or by scoundrels who might take advantage of the absence of authority to indulge in every kind of robbery. At the death of the Moro Naba his province was sacked by armed bands, and no one dared to go out unarmed. On the day following the death of Moro Naba Sigri, we had to fetch millet from a village located a few kilometers from Ouagadougou. All the bearers were armed with bows, arrows, and spears. They made an interesting picture in the moonlight.

766 In spite of all their amulets and all their sacrifices, nabas die just like their subjects, and when this happens, his relatives hastily dig a pit in the entrance hut of the soukala and lay the corpse there without any ceremonies. Those wishing to see the naba will be told that he is unwell. The naba of Koupéla is especially favored in this respect. One of the huts in his soukala, standing near the entrance, is set aside for his burial. A pit has been dug within the hut, and every /72/ day the caretaker comes to pour dolo into the hole. This caretaker must not have a wife, and if he happens to have one before his appointment to this post, the naba takes her for himself. On the other hand, the caretaker eats the same food as the naba and drinks the same millet beer. Needless to say, this job is not in great demand. The
● [761] naba may not enter the hut, and when the roof is in need of repair, the drummers are sent for, and the naba must flee; woe to him if he should hear the sound of the drums, for he would die within the year. When the naba of Koupéla dies, his hands and feet are immediately pierced with big thorns so that he may not return; should he venture to seize one of his people after his death, the thorns would cause him such pain that he would immediately let go of his prey. The corpse is tossed into the pit to fall as it may. The Mossi, full of respect for their chiefs when they are alive, make up for it when they are dead.

Young unmarried men or girls are buried with a previously deceased old woman of the family, so that someone will take care of them in the other life. Their death is regarded as a true misfortune and mourned accordingly. There are no dances or ceremonies. The father, mother, and younger siblings shave their heads on the second or third day after the burial.

[775] A small child is buried by the path. He will soon return in the person of the first child borne by his mother after his death.

766 Suicides are buried like our dogs; here, all dogs are eaten. Lepers
● [761] are buried at night without festivities. Accidental death, whether
[362] from a fall, snake bite, or any other cause, is attributed to an evil spirit who must not be irked by granting funerary honors to its victim, or else it would return and kill another member of the family. This is why those who die of an accident are buried without ceremonies and without undertakers. Their heads are not shaved, because God has called them with their hair on, as the Mossi say. A pit is dug, they
769 are buried, and that is all. They have no one to represent them; to the anniversary of their death, the koure, they have no kourita.

Every Mossi who dies of illness, be it man, woman, child, or naba, survives in the person of the kourita. In the case of a married man, the kourita or koutoarsa (who imitates the deceased) is a woman of the dead person's family, usually one of the wives of one of his younger brothers, someone who bears a certain resemblance to the deceased. She is chosen by the family, and sometimes designated by the dying person. She wears the clothes of the deceased, his shirt, his blanket, his hat, his shoes, his bracelets, and his rings; she wears his belt and knives, walks with his staff, his hoe, his doré, and bears his spear, blade pointing toward the ground. She walks like the person she represents. She must imitate him in every way and keep his presence alive in the household. If the deceased was usually accompanied by a /73/ child bearing his satchel, the kourita is followed by the same child bearing the same satchel, but turned inside out. If the deceased was a leper and had no fingers, she pretends not to have any; if he liked to laugh, she laughs; if he was peevish and quarreled with everyone, she maintains a constant state of anger. The children of the deceased call her their father; the wives call her their husband and prepare her millet mush. If the dead man was a naba, she is called naba; if he was not, she is called by the name of the deceased.

769 She acts in this manner until the day of koure. On that day she
428 shaves her head like the other members of the family, and her role ends there. She retains the name kourita, however, and on the day when the inheritance is distributed, she receives a garment in exchange for the clothes of the deceased. If the heir is generous, if the inheritance allows it, she is given some livestock, sometimes a child. It is said that the kourita dies sooner than if she had not played this role, because the ancestral spirits will come and fetch her. For this reason, the position is not in great demand.

776 tangandé in every detail either, for only the village may have a tangandé, and there does not seem to be any magic pact unless the sacrifices offered are considered as such a pact, which does not seem justified. The tangandé-animal is never sacrificed, and no special initiation takes place.

774 The closest thing to totemism among the Mossi seems to be their
761 concept of the human soul, and yet it is not, properly speaking, a
[775] totem in the sense indicated by these authors. Every man has a soul that lives on after death and takes the name of kyma, while during life it is called siga. Shortly before death it takes the name of toullé
[197] /85/ in Ouagadougou or toundo in Koupela, but siga, toundo, kyma are one and the same thing, one and the same principle. According to the Mossi, this soul is an animal, invisible of course, a snake, a crocodile, a deer, a hare. The soul is related to this animal, it belongs to the same family, so that to kill a snake or a crocodile in a village where the soul of the inhabitants is a snake or a crocodile is to kill an inhabitant of the village; every individual related to the snake has a snake in the village to represent thim, and he will die when his soul-animal dies.

774 Yet, and this runs counter to the definitions of totemism, the in-
784 dividual expects no aid from this animal, never sacrifices to it, and never kills it himself to renew the kinship pact. A person whose soul is a crocodile is forbidden to kill crocodiles in his own village, but he may kill them elsewhere, although he may never eat them, while he may kill the tangandé animal as long as he does so outside the tangandé, and he may eat it at any time. Some people, when they
[766] find a dead soul-animal of their family near their village, render it funeral honors, weep, wail, and bury it as one of their own, but they offer it no gifts and hold no koure. Generally it is merely covered with earth. The most widespread soul-animals are a kind of snake
[582] (bosombodro) and the crocodile. Several families may have the same one, and marriage, although exogamic, is not forbidden between members of these families.

774 The soul may leave the body and in fact leaves it often, especially
754 during the night. If children had a good time in a certain place, if they enjoyed themselves at someone's house, the soul returns there at night. This is when the worst is to be feared from the sorcerers; they may seize the soul by surprise, and its unfortunate owner will die.

774 In the course of a dream, the soul may warn its owner of a threaten-
828 ing danger. One day a native, whose village and name were told to
761 me, dreamed that his enemy offered him a kola nut. Much anxiety ensued, for this is a sign used by the soul to indicate that an enemy threatens one with death. In such a case there is only one remedy, to deposit a few cowries on a nest of large red ants, so they will avert the disaster. The man set out immediately for the nearest ant nest. Alas, a snake bit him along the way, and he died before he could offer his gift to the ants! Such occurrences obviously make a profound imprint on the imagination of the natives, who immediately react with the sophism: post hoc, propter hoc. A few such cases are sufficient to anchor them forever in their superstitions, and innumerable such occurrences were related to me.

774 If the soul can leave the body, it is possible to seize it and to pre-
761 vent it from re-entering its body, and this is why our Blacks do not like to be photographed. They say that there is an evil spirit in the box, who takes the soul and eats it. This is proved by the fact that the individual may later be seen on the piece of paper.

774 One becomes sick when his soul cannot re-enter the body because
753 it is held prisoner by an evil sorcerer or by a kikiriga, and many sacrifices must be offered to obtain its release /86/ and return. Entreaties are usually directed to the tangandé in such cases, because it is stronger than all the other spirits, stronger even than the sorcerers, and because its function is to protect the village.

774 Sometimes the soul was so well hidden that the tangandé cannot
761 find it: the sorcerer has eaten it right away, or the tangandé itself
754 is in collusion; or the ancestral spirits are calling the sick person; or,
775 finally, it is God who sent the disease. Nothing can be done, and the person dies. His soul changes names, and henceforth is called kyma. It leaves the body at the moment of death. If it was taken by a sorcerer or by the ancestral spirits, at the moment of death it leaves the sacred grove where it was held captive. It proceeds to the place of souls from where it will return to the grave whenever sacrifices are offered to it. It will also return if it wishes to afflict the survivors with a disease of some sort.

775 Is the soul punished for the evil it has done on earth and rewarded
735 for the good? Opinions on the subject differ. Some say that when one gives alms to the poor, and the Mossi frequently do, when one is generous and hospitable, God takes all that has been given and sets

775 ground; he also pours what is left at the bottom of the gourd, so the
769 souls will rejoice with him. It is considered a great honor when a
[554] naba tells an elder to grasp one side of the gourd and to pour along with him.

775 One must not laugh about the souls of the deceased and their visits
761 to earth. If you doubt their return, listen to what an old naba once told me. "One day, I had gone to visit a naba, my friend and neighbor. We had arranged to meet at his house with another neighboring chief. He gave us a very nice welcome, and the day was most pleasant. We were resting at night in the shelter of his soukala when we were suddenly awakened by the sound of harness bells and horses galloping. On the following day we left our host. No sooner had we left than he took ill. A week later he died. The souls had come to fetch him. Oh! Father, do not laugh about the souls of the deceased!" And the good old man trembled with emotion. This is what our Mossi believe. They firmly believe in all these ghost stories.

775 Are the souls reincarnated? Small children who die before the age of reason are said to return in the person of the first child borne by their mother. This is why, especially if the mother has lost several
[304] children in a row, the baby is marked at birth with distinctive signs, particularly tattooings on the belly and lower back; sometimes, if he
[766] dies, a piece of his ear is cut off, or a toe or finger joint broken. It is said that the child born next will bear the same marks, but no living example of this could be cited. Often, the mother leaves the hut where her baby died. An old woman spreads ashes before the door in the evening, and if small footprints are found in the morning, it is a sign that the child came back and wishes to return to his mother's bosom.

Rebirth is not granted to anyone other than young children, not even to young unmarried people. They remain in the place of the souls for years on end, the number of which cannot be ascertained, and no distinction is made between the rich and the poor, the powerful and their subjects.

775 The soul of suicides, cursed in death, is not entitled as a rule to
762 funeral ceremonies. It wanders through the world without harming anyone, but unable to find rest.

577 Morality is reduced to its simplest expression. Whatever harms
673 other people is bad. Think your own intimate thoughts and desire anything you like; as long as you do no harm to your fellow man, no fault has been committed. Fornication and adultery are faults only

681 As far as penalties were concerned, Mossi justice was stern and thus ran counter to the "patriarchal" justice of the Bobo, Gourounsi, etc. Murder was always punished by death (except in the case of nobles). As for thefts, physical aggression, and matters involving debts, they were adjusted in the manner described when we discussed the Yarsé, who were subject to Mossi justice since they were settled in their territory /not translated/.

[754] We shall not, therefore, go over this again. Let us merely note that the Mossi, being fetishists, were familiar with matters of sorcery.

695 754 At Dembo, in the Yatenga area, when a young person died suddenly, "red powder" would be mixed in water and everyone would drink of it while swearing by Tensé /Tr.: the earth deities/ that he was innocent. The culprits would die. In other villages of the Yatenga area, people suspected of dealing in sorcery had to drink earth taken from the spot where sacrifices were performed and diluted in water. Those /581/ who refused to drink and swear were killed. At Kabayoro, a Mossi village located in the canton of Koumbili, if a man or woman suddenly ill, it was said that it was So-and-So, a sorcerer, who had eaten the soul. If the sick person died, his hands were washed with water and the liquid was given to the sorcerer to drink. He had to swear his innocence and invoke death unto himself if he should lie. If guilty he died; if innocent the water did him no harm. If he refused to swear and drink, he was put in irons and left there to die of hunger and thirst. The bara /soothsayer/ played no role in such occurrences. It was the sick person who pointed out the sorcerer. If the patient failed to designate someone, however, this meant that he was simply dying of illness.

[761]

701 Now for the army and police. "In case of war," says Moulins, "the province chiefs summoned the canton chiefs, who hastened forth with all their able-bodied men. They all gathered behind the Tamsaba and followed him.

625 "As for policing, it was taken care of by village and canton chiefs, who arrested culprits with the help of their own followers, or, if necessary, by summoning the whole male population of the village."

8: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1958
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776 considered the wife of a male deity called *Winnam*, *Windé*, or *Naba Zidiwindé*. The true nature of Winnam is not clear. The Mossi say: "Winnam is the sun, and Winnam is God"; he is considered a sun god as well as a supreme deity. [775] Winnam is venerated but he is not feared, because it is the dead ancestors who chastise evil-doers by affliction or death. When wicked people die they face the wrath of the ancestors in *Keemsétenga*, or land of the ancestors.

The Mossi have several concepts of the spiritual essence or animating prin- 774 ciple of man. First there is the *seega* (pl. *seesé*), an entity found in all living beings; it leaves the body during sleep, and its adventures provide the dreams of men. The seega can be captured during its nocturnal wanderings or in places where large crowds congregate. If the seega is captured and eaten by a [761] sorcerer, its owner will die. A man's shadow is also called his seega; persons about to die have no shadows, since their seesé have either been stolen or have [822] left on their own account.

Another principle called the *keema* (pl. *keemsé*) is associated with the dead 775 or with persons about to die. The keema of a dying man wanders around and often frightens people; as soon as he is dead, he is no longer referred to by name but is called the "keema." Keemsé is also the word used for the generalized [769] ancestors who sanction the behavior of the living and who must be placated if people wish to have enough food, wives, children, and good health. A man's own keemsé take a vital interest in his affairs, in return for which they receive nourishment in the form of the seesé (animals do not have keemsé) of sacrificed animals.

[827] The breath, called *wousem*, is also considered an animating principle by the Mossi and, since it leaves the body through the nose at death, they believe that a man's nose is the first thing to die. It is not clear how the seega is disposed of when the body dies. Some people say it remains forever about the haunts of man; others believe that it goes to a mountain called Plimpikou and disappears into a cavern. Still others believe that the seega becomes the keema and goes to Plimpikou, from whence the keemsé come to visit their descendants. It is difficult to determine whether the Mossi have always been vague about their traditional religious concepts or whether this uncertainty is the result of the influx of such foreign creeds as Islam and Christianity.

175 The first recorded contact between the Mossi and Moslems took place around 1328 when the Yatenga Mossi attacked, burned, and sacked Timbuktu, 797 then held by the Dia dynasty of the Songhoi (Dubois 1896:251). For more than a century afterward, the Mossi pursued a turbulent and aggressive policy in the region of the Niger bend, pushing as far as Gourma, Walata, and Banku (ibid:127). They were finally defeated and routed by Sonni Ali in 1477. In 1499, when Askia the Great (El Hadj Mohammed ben Abou Bekr, usurper of the Songhoi throne from the Sonni dynasty in 1494) returned from his pilgrimage to Mecca, he launched a *jihad* or holy war on the Mossi who had rejected his ultimatum to adopt Islam. Askia defeated the Mossi, "devastated the towns and countryside, took men, women, and children as prisoners, and forcibly converted these captives to Islam" (Dubois 1896:127–128). The

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Naba regularly saw his son in private, and that the prince often interceded successfully with his father for the lives of rebels or criminals.

The Mogho Naba seldom saw his younger sons, who usually remained with their mothers' patrilineages until they were old enough to be assigned district chieftainships or sent to live in villages controlled by the Baloum Naba. He was rather suspicious of these boys, who, if certain traditions are believed, were not averse to plotting the death of the Djiba Naba in order to succeed to the nam. The district chiefs also feared these younger sons, in whose favor they were often deposed by the Mogho Naba. Almost all of the dynastic changes that occurred in the Mossi districts seem to have stemmed from a ruler's attempt to find districts for his brothers or his younger sons.

The ruler was less concerned with the welfare of his daughters and female relatives. Their marriages seldom benefited the political system. As a matter of fact, the behavior of a royal princess usually strained the relations between her husband and the ruling lineage. The reason for this was a status conflict: as wives, they had low prestige in Mossi society; but as relatives of the Mogho Naba, they enjoyed high status. This contradiction made it difficult for them to accept the low estate of wives. Consequently, they clashed with their husband and often dominated the women and co-wives in his compound. Since few Mossi men tolerate strife within their household, these noble wives often withdrew from their husband's home and established one of their own. The one exception to this pattern was the ruler's eldest daughter, the Napoko, whose ceremonial duties at his death and during the interregnum compelled her to remain loyal to the husband chosen for her by the king. Like her brother, the Crown Prince, if she violated any of the traditions and thus became ineligible to fulfill her duties to her father and to the state, she endangered the country at its weakest moment, when the government was being transferred from the deceased Mogho Naba to his successor.

The death of a Mogho Naba was usually attributed to foul play or supernatural forces. When Mogho Naba Sagha II died in 1957, a report from Ouagadougou stated that the Governor of the Upper Volta had felt constrained to have an autopsy performed to quell rumors that the monarch had died of poisoning.[82] The obvious function of such rumors was to dramatize the gravity of the situation during the interregnum.

Because the Mogho Naba was usually accompanied by a page, it was often this boy who witnessed his death. It was the page's responsibility to notify the Baloum Naba, who notified, in order, the Ouidi Naba, the Larhalle Naba, the Kamsaogho Naba, the Gounga Naba, the ruler's children,

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French Forces were present there. The official Vichy radio began broadcasts urging discipline, increased production, and "patriotic cooperation in making the Federation [of French West Africa] a military bastion against the encroachment of its British neighbors."[58] In response, local officials ordered Mossi chiefs to provide laborers to build trenches and fortifications between the two areas. The Free French, for their part, used the Gold Coast as a center for the distribution of anti-Pétain propaganda, and tried to employ returning Mossi labor migrants as couriers. The majority of these young men were not interested in politics, however, and those who were prevailed upon to take propaganda leaflets into Mossi country simply discarded them as soon as they crossed the border.

The pressures, counter-pressures, and anxieties of this period were apparently too much for Mogho Naba Kom II, who died on March 12, 1942. By the next morning, countless rumors to the effect that the Mogho Naba had committed suicide had spread as far as the Gold Coast. The most widespread rumor was that the Mogho Naba's anti-Pétainist views had become clear to the administration. In reprisal, he was "placed under surveillance on Boisson's orders and separated from his subjects. He died solemnly by his own hand after having summoned his son and commanded him not to take office 'until the true French should return.'"[59] Another widely circulated rumor, probably originated by Moslems, was that the Catholic missionaries, freed from the restraints of Paris, had tried to compel the Mogho Naba to divorce his many wives and become monogamous. The Mogho Naba allegedly could not comply with this demand because it would have been a severe violation of Mossi tradition for a royal wife to become the wife of any other man while her husband was still alive. Faced with this dilemma, the rumor said, the Mogho Naba committed suicide.

The official French report on the Mogho Naba's death reveals that the administration was aware of these and other rumors and of their potential influence on the behavior of the Mossi people. The report also shows that the French officials believed, and credited the Mossi with believing, the classical superstition that "The heavens themselves blaze forth the death of princes." The report states:

> Over the last few years, the health of Saidou Congo [Mogho Naba Kom II] has been impaired by heart trouble, and it was a heart attack which carried him off at about 11 P.M. on March 12th.
>
> The natives have no explanation for sudden deaths, and attribute them either to supernatural intervention or to poison. Besides, two phenomena had occurred just then to strike the imagination: there had been a total eclipse of the moon on the night of March 2d to 3d, which announced,

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When a woman has a number of stillbirths or
845 loses her children when they are still babies, however, it is believed
761 than these children were embodiments of the same *kinkirsi* (spirits)
776 who must be tricked into remaining on earth when it returns, and
443 the market place is chosen as the site for this trickery. As soon as such
851 a woman gives birth to a child, and old woman places it in a basket
443 and on the next market day takes it to the market place. Her intention is to "sell" the child in the hope that it would not die if owned by someone other than its mother. The old woman walks around the market place shouting: "I have something to sell!" Invariably a man will walk up to her, and after ascertaining the contents of the basket, offer to buy it. The price varies with the fortune of the man, but traditionally the amount paid has been 500 cowries or their equivalent. The man takes the child for a few minutes and then returns it to its vendor, telling her in a loud voice so that the kinkirsi will hear: "I would like you to give this child to 'X' (the child's mother) to be reared for me and I will pay for its upbringing and will come
[551] for the child in a few years. He then gives the child the name *Yamba*
[553] (slave), or *Yemdaogo* (male slave) if male and *Yempoko* (female slave) if a girl. The old woman then returns the child to its mother, relating what has passed in the market and indicating who the "owner" of her child is. The "owner" of the child may not even see the child again, and naturally does not take this ownership seriously. In many cases the money with which he bought the child was given to him by the child's father.

852 The market also plays an important part in the circumcision and
443 incision ceremonies of Mossi boys and girls. For about two to three months after the actual operations the young children, especially the boys are secluded in the circumcision lodges or compounds and have almost no contact with the village population. Their re-introduction to society always takes place on the great market day. The parents of the children buy new clothing for them this occasion, and on the appointed day the boys or girls parade together in the market and are offered gifts by the market people. Later in the day, they are dismissed and individually feted by their relatives.

585 Owing to the relatively unceremonious nature of Mossi marriages,
76 the market does not play a role in Mossi weddings. However, the
554 same thing cannot be said about the last important *rite de passage,*
443 especially the funeral of a chief, or important elder. Prior to the intervention of the French, and to a lesser extent even today, the announcement of the death of an important ruler was seen as the breakdown of law and order and was ritually dramatized by a popular raid
[565] on the markets throughout the territories (Skinner : ms). During the interregnum the vendors are subject to constant raids by members of